

Interstate 90 Corridor Facilities Study Update

March 2006

La Crosse and Monroe counties

Greetings from the I-90 study team. This article is to update interested persons on the I-90 corridor facilities study being conducted by the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) and their consultant, CH2M HILL. The existing roadside facilities include the French Island Welcome Center at La Crosse, the safety and weight enforcement facility (SWEF) at West Salem, the eastbound Bangor rest area and the westbound Sparta rest area. The purpose of the study is to provide a long-range plan for modern roadside facilities that serve the traveling public and trucking industry, enhance freeway operations and safety, and that are compatible with present and planned land use.

In September 2005, preliminary alternatives were presented to the project's advisory committee (local officials and other interested stakeholders) and at the second public information meeting in West Salem. The preliminary rest area alternatives included options for upgrading the French Island Welcome Center, eliminating the Bangor rest area and upgrading the existing Sparta rest area. The SWEF alternatives included expanding the existing facility, moving it to the Bangor rest area, and two possible new sites (just east of Bangor or west of the I-90/WIS 27 interchange at Sparta).

Based on input from the September 2005 meetings, continued coordination with state and federal review agencies, additional engineering, environmental and cost considerations, WisDOT has identified a recommended plan that will be presented at the next project advisory committee meeting and public information meeting in summer 2006. The recommended plan is summarized as follows:

French Island Welcome Center

- Upgrade the welcome center to improve access, parking and aesthetic features
 - Build a modern and larger welcome center building on the west edge of the property overlooking the river
 - Provide truck parking (north end of site) and move auto parking toward the middle of the site, close to the new building
- Improvements would be constructed within the existing welcome center right-of-way

Contact information

For additional information about the I-90 corridor facilities study, contact one of the following study team members:

Dave Simon, P.E.
Roadside Facilities, Room 501
WisDOT, P.O. Box 7986
Madison, WI 53707-7986
(608) 266-7231
david.simon@dot.state.wi.us

Dan Dupies
Consultant Project Manager
CH2M HILL
135 South 84th Street, Suite 325
Milwaukee, WI 53214
(414) 272-2426
ddupies@ch2m.com



Safety and Weight Enforcement Facility (SWEF)

- Eliminate the existing SWEF at West Salem and move it to the Bangor rest area
- SWEF land outside the I-90 right-of-way would be available for sale at a later time

Bangor Rest Area

- Eliminate rest area function and use the site for the new SWEF
- Autos that currently use the rest area would be served by the French Island Welcome Center and eastbound Lyndon Station rest area
- Truck parking needs would be met through a combination of parking facilities at the French Island Welcome Center and the new SWEF
- New SWEF would require a minor amount of new land acquisition

Sparta Rest Area

- Upgrade the existing rest area to provide additional truck and auto parking, and to provide a larger, modern building
- Proposed improvements would be constructed within existing rest area right-of-way.

During the next few months, the study team will continue to refine the recommended plan and prepare concept plans showing details of the proposed improvements. Work is also underway on the environmental document that will describe the proposed improvements and their impacts. The next project advisory committee meeting and public information meeting will be held in summer 2006. The public information meeting will be announced in local newspapers and through a newsletter to persons on the project's mailing list.

CH2MHILL

135 South 84th Street
Suite 325
Milwaukee, WI 53214

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